

COPY

Speech made at the meeting of the National Education Association, held in the city of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, July 14, 1891.

By

Reverend Principal Grant

Comrades in the Teaching Profession of the United States: Standing here to speak for Canada and regarding you as the representatives of the United States, the solemnity of the occasion should, I suppose, oppress me; but, to be frank with you, my feelings are rather those that belong to good-fellowship than to solemnity. You are here for a holiday as much as for anything else, and when cousins meet - for are we not cousins? yes, more than cousins - "We are a' John Lamson's bairns" - when cousins meet to have a picnic together, they are supposed to be in the mood for laughter and not for long faces.

It is my duty, however, to tell you that Canada is a very big country. The people of Toronto would doubtless like you to believe that their city is the whole or the larger half of Canada; for Toronto has a fair share of that healthy localism that distinguishes almost every place of any size on this continent. I have never been in a city in America where I was not shown something which hospitable friends assured me was the finest thing of the kind in the world, and so they put their city first after the manner in which Mr. Slick proved to the Judge the supreme greatness of the Slick family. You must make allowances for this pardonable pride, for even the Apostle Paul had it; and remember that you have not seen Canada till you have visited other great cities of which you have heard as little as you heard previously to this convention of Toronto, such as Peultanginsheul and Petecodial and Mages and Nearamictin and Guassies, not to speak of our Gardens of Eden, Paradises, Golden Shores, cities, and other well known centres.

But big as Canada is you must not expect too much, for we are only a baby nation after all. People tell us, too, that we are not a nation at all, but only a dominion. However, we are practical persons, and for these the one word means pretty much the same thing as the other. We have the rights and privileges of a nation, except the privilege of paying a share of imperial expenses; and when these mean an expensive army or a still more expensive pension fund, some of us are not half as sorry as we should be that we have no share in paying the bill.

You have been accustomed to think of yourselves as a young nation, but compared to baby Canada, think how old you are. Judging by the looks of a good many, I should say that you must be at least "sweet sixteen." Our birthday was the 1st of July, 1867; yours the 4th of July, 1776. When you were born as a nation 115 years ago, during a little unpleasantness with your mother, you were thirteen sturdy Colonies; you numbered in all 3,000,000 of the best British stock; you had been nurtured too, by more

then a century's conflict with savage wildernesses, still more savage Indians, and disciplined regiments from France. What was the condition of Canada then? With the exception of a handful here and there on the coast of Nova Scotia, there was not an English-speaking community in any one of the seven Provinces and five Territories that now constitute the Dominion. This great Province of Ontario was covered with unbroken forest. Even the city of Toronto was not. Our population consisted of 60,000 or 70,000 inhabitants along the St. Lawrence. No wonder that French-speaking Canadians are still an important element with us; especially in the Department of Public Works or railways and canals, those departments of the country that are known as the "money spending" to distinguish them from others that are merely money-making. You are more than a century older than Canada, you see, and you must therefore make allowances, and not show more contempt for us than a lad of sixteen usually does for a boy of six-or for his grandmother.

I think that you will take to us, for we are wonderfully like you in some things. For instance, nothing pleases us so much as washing our dirty linen, both municipal and federal, in public. When a particularly dirty bit is dragged to light it is greeted with yells of exultation. Read our papers, and you will see that even this great convention does not get anything like the same number of columns that a Parliamentary scandal gets; and the relative amount of space gives a faint conception of the comparative interest taken in each by the Canadian public. Since I have referred to this point of likeness between us, you will excuse me if I add that our virtue is conspicuous, not only in Sabbath-keeping but ⁱⁿ exposing corruption. I understand that you leave it to Democrats to tell on the Republicans, and to Republicans to expose the Democrats, whereas in our Dominion investigation, our men are of the same political stripe. You will give us credit, then, for having the innocence as well as the immaturity of youth.

If we do not pay you the compliment of a vast amount of newspaper space, you must not think that our welcome is cold. You have received in advance the greatest compliment that one country could pay to another. Should the teachers of Canada visit the States in July, I doubt if Congress would pay them the compliment of adjourning on Canada's National day, and making up for it by listening to tedious speeches and doing what they called "business" on the Fourth of July. But that is what our Parliament did this year; in your honor, no doubt, for if that was not the reason, nobody knows what was. When you go home again, give this as a proof that we are the most courteous people under the sun. That is one of the advantages we get from having so many French in Canada; for Frenchmen are always polite.

I am told that to-day I represent not only the Dominion, but specially the Universities, and so the managers of this meeting have paid you the compliment of soliciting a schoolmaster to represent Canada. That, I may mention, is my business as well as yours, for, as Carlyle points out, what is a university but a school. In the common school pupils learn to read in their own language. In the university they learn to read in all languages, to appreciate all literatures, to read the human mind, to read the inspired volumes of nature and almost undecipherable tomes of universal history.

As a comrade I bid you a hearty welcome. I say, "Magnify your office." Twenty years before the Revolutionary War broke out, John Adams taught school in Worcester, and long before that Benjamin Franklin began those researches into electricity that made him famous. Greater names there are not among your statesmen and men of science. Well, when John Adams was an old man, he testified that he acquired more knowledge of human nature by keeping school than by his work "at the head, in the world of politics, or at the courts of Europe." He advised every young man to "keep school," for it was "the best method of acquiring patience, self-command, and a knowledge of character." There are men like Adams, Jay, Franklin, Washington, now teaching school in Canada and the States.

Remember that your welcome is not merely Canadian. We represent the world-wide commonwealth of Britain. I am no more a mere Canuck than you are mere Northerners or Southerners, Yankees or Western men. You have given the most splendid proof of devotion to your Union and to the flag that represents the Union. We desire to imitate you; to say in your own classic words, "We follow no flag, we march with no party, that does not keep step with the Union." We twine your flag with ours. Next to our own we love it best, for you are of our roll, and the blows you have struck for freedom were for us as well as for yourselves. How much more should you love and honor the red cross flag! for your inheritance in it is larger than in your own, did you but reflect for a moment.

"We, too, are heirs of Runnymede," says Whittier, and he is right. We admit the claim; I would have you take your full share. Yes, you are heirs of Runnymede, and of Naseby fight, and the plains of Abraham as well; you are heirs of Shakespeare and Milton, of Hampden, Russell, and Sydney, even as we are heirs of Washington and Lincoln. Think what that flag represents to us! Not only national existence, but the cause of humanity all over the world; not only freedom-personal, political, intellectual, commercial, civil, religious-but also the most pregnant spiritual ideas that ever descended from heaven to earth. It is the cross of St. George, the cross of St. Andrew, and the cross of St. Patrick, the three in one; and as the cross means light and life, so where the flag waves there is justice for all, peace by land and sea, and the proclamation of good news to every

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but especially the University, and as the measure of this
is to be held for the benefit of the University and as well
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son of Adam. O kinsmen! blend the two flags together, and count those men enemies of the race who seek to erect or seek to maintain barriers between the British Commonwealth and the United States, or who teach that it is a good thing for neighbors to have no intercourse with each other. Join hands and never forget that we at least are children of the light.

son of Mrs. O. Kinnear! Glad the two lines together, and
 could stand the question of the two who were to stand or
 to maintain barriers between the British Commonwealth and the
 United States, as who teach that it is a good thing for
 to have an intercourse with each other. Join hands and never
 forget that we at least are children of the light.

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